

REGIONAL PLANNING OF HIGHER EDUCATION

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With the passing of pioneer days and the improvement of means of travel and communication, colleges and universities of this country face a number of entirely new situations. Established in the beginning to provide college work for a limited number of students in a somewhat narrow geographical area, oftentimes with the sanction of some church denomination, more than a thousand private colleges were created in America. At the same time the great bodies of citizens representing communities of the State, believing that higher education was essential for public welfare and the maintenance and advancement of the interests of the State, established several hundred teachers colleges, land-grant colleges, technological schools, and universities. The competition between these institutions for support and for students became more and more intense. They expanded their activities, they enlarged their plants, increased their personnel, became rivals for private and public support. The origin and growth of the collegiate institutions of this country differed in no fundamental respect from the origin and growth of business enterprises generally. The ambitions of alumni and of the commercial interests of the community in which the institutions were located increased the rivalry among collegiate institutions. The success of college administration was measured by its growth and the increase in its budget. Colleges advertised extensively for students. They created scholarships to induce students to attend them and they sent agents into the field to advertise their wares.

Colleges no longer confine their appeals to the local areas they were originally established to cover. Students can travel from one end of the State to the other between sunrise and sunset. The colleges that have survived must now make their appeal

to students over a wider area than they did a few years ago. Financial angels who were willing to lavish large gifts upon educational institutions to provide memorials for themselves and for their families seem to be disappearing; certainly they are less numerous than formerly. Higher standards are being required of colleges everywhere. They are subject to an increasing amount of public discussion, scrutiny, and examination partly because an enormous amount of duplication of effort, of offerings, and of expanse exists among them. College administrators are giving far more attention to the intellectual organization of their institutions than to their exploitation with a view to obtaining students. College leaders, instead of being promoters, are now finding it necessary to become students of education.

The impact of all these forces, due to changing conditions, upon the collegiate institutions of this country is resulting in a number of fundamental changes. These changes are expressing themselves in at least three important ways; namely, the actual consolidation of institutions, interinstitutional coöperation, and the establishment of federations in higher education. Since 1928 at least two dozen colleges have merged. Examples of this are found in the following list:¹

<i>Formerly</i>	<i>Present Name</i>
Albright College Schuylkill College	Albright College, Reading, Pa.
Atlanta University Morehouse College Spelman College	Atlanta University, Atlanta, Ga.
Austin College Texas Presbyterian College	Austin College, Sherman, Texas
Centre College Kentucky College for Women	Centre College of Kentucky Danville, Ky.
Chicora College for Women Queens College	Queens-Chicora College, Charlotte, N. C.

¹ Many of the facts on this and the following pages were derived from an article by John A. Pollard in *School and Society*, September 19, 1931.

<i>Formerly</i>	<i>Present Name</i>
Columbia University New York Post-Graduate Medical School and Hospital	Columbia University, New York, N. Y.
Hannibal College LeGrange College	Hannibal-LaGrange College, Hannibal, Mo.
Knox College Lombard College	Knox College, Galesburg, Ill.
Lane Theological Seminary Presbyterian Theological Seminary	In process of amalgamation
Miami University Oxford College for Women	Miami University, Oxford, Ohio
New Orleans University Straight University	Dillard University, New Orleans, La.
Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Zenia United Presbyterian Theological Seminary	Pittsburgh-Zenia Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, Pa.
Rochester College of Optometry University of Rochester	University of Rochester, Rochester, N. Y.

One needs only to review the situation in almost any State to find abundant evidence of the need of further mergers. A recent report shows that in Ohio, for example, within an area of 41,040 square miles and a (1930) population of 6,689,837, there were fifty-two institutions of collegiate grade, six of which received public support and the remaining forty-six were, in the main, privately controlled. Only seven of these forty-six had endowments amounting to \$500,000. Only seven of the forty-six had more than \$100,000 each from productive funds. Sixteen had less than \$100,000 from all sources, and of these sixteen, seven

had less than \$50,000 each. Eighteen of the forty-six had less than \$25,000 each in productive funds.

One institution that had enrolled 1,800 students had only 13,000 volumes in its library. Forty-nine institutions had less than 10,000 volumes in their libraries. Out of a total of thirty-six Ohio private colleges listing their 1927-1928 productive endowments, twelve had less than one thousand dollars per student each, and only seven had more than five thousand dollars per student each. One institution had only eight dollars in endowment for each student enrolled.

The unfortunate feature about this situation is that a great many colleges do not yet recognize the impossibility of continuing on their present basis. They are still engaged in a struggle to secure students. They are offering and must continue to offer a poor quality of collegiate education. By specious advertising and the blandishments of field agents they are undertaking to maintain their registration. They have apparently great powers of endurance and a lingering vitality. If they could continue to exist without wrecking the hopes and dreams of unsuspecting students, the case would not be so bad. But that is impossible. Students come to them with high hopes, only to learn later that they have been defrauded by false claims and that the quality of the work which they have received is superficial.

The growth and spread of higher education in this country is revealed in striking form by figures collected by Sir Michael Sadler, of Oxford, who not long ago pointed out that in Great Britain one out of every 1,000 in the population attended a university; in France, one out of 700; in Germany, one out of 650; and in the United States, one out of every 120. The policy in America has been to insist that every student who desires to do so may attend college. This has been in keeping with the democratic philosophy that has been prevailing in American education since Colonial times. It may be that, instead of insisting that

all students should attend college or have an equal right to attend college, the educational system should be reorganized to correspond more nearly with the actual capacities and needs of the students, for it is obvious that a large percentage of the students attending college find it impossible to do satisfactory college work. Dean Gauss, of Princeton, states that only thirty-seven and one-half per cent attending college leave with diplomas.

Changes that are forcing institutions to merge are leading also to various forms of interinstitutional coöperation. Certain universities, for example, have agreed tentatively that they will not undertake to duplicate work in certain fields. Chicago and Texas have entered into joint agreement to maintain a single astronomical observatory. A number of Canadian institutions have evolved a tentative scheme for the allocation of functions. An interchange of professors between certain institutions and certain departments is becoming more common. Work given at one institution is accepted by another institution not offering it.

This coöperation is due partly to a desire to eliminate waste in higher education, partly to a desire to improve the quality of higher education itself, and partly because specialization in the various fields of learning is making coöperation necessary.

Perhaps one of the most conspicuous illustrations of waste, and certainly of duplication in higher education, occurs in the land-grant colleges. The Federal Government has provided a land-grant college for each State and territory. It has set aside a certain sum of money for the operation and maintenance of certain work of these land-grant institutions. There is a duplication of plant, of offerings, of staff, and of equipment among the institutions. A half dozen or more of these institutions are located in the same geographical area serving, in general, the same constituencies and undertaking to solve the same problems. One of the most notorious illustrations of this is to be found in the land-grant colleges located at Moscow, Idaho, and Pullman,

Washington; they are within eight miles of each other. At each institution work is being carried on in agronomy, animal husbandry, poultry, forestry, and in the other fields that relate to the advancement and improvement of agriculture.

It is my candid opinion that the nation would be far ahead in productive scientific work in the field of agriculture, in all other fields of learning for that matter, if there were a regionalizing of institutions. One great university located somewhere here in the Northwest, staffed with the best minds that can be found, adequately equipped to study the problems of this region, would be more productive scientifically than a half-dozen institutions that are poorly equipped and inadequately staffed.

The best illustration that I have of this is in Australia. A man by the name of Waite left a sum of money for the establishment of an experiment station in agriculture at Adelaide. This station is now receiving support from the State of South Australia, from the other States of the federation, and from the federal government. It is carrying on scientific work in every part of Australia. Plots of ground in different soil areas have been made available to it. It studies the plant life and animal life of the various sections of Australia as they are related to these various soil and geographical areas. The station itself, located near Adelaide, is staffed by some of the most brilliant scientific minds that the world has produced. Instead of dissipating the energies of the staff and instead of establishing a number of more or less pale imitations of the institute in other sections of the country, there have been concentrated in one place the materials and equipment and the minds necessary for the highest kind of productive work. Perhaps we cannot do this in America but we could look forward to the time when there might be some regionalizing of institutions and when the Federal Government would make its grants not on the political basis it has used in the past but with a view

actually towards advancing science and the regions in which these institutions are located.

What is suggested with regard to land-grant institutions can be carried out to some extent by agreement among the universities themselves if their constituencies will subscribe to the agreement. Each institution might be encouraged to develop along those lines that are most favorable to it as a result of its location. The neighboring institutions might agree to accept each other's work. There is no real reason, for example, why there should be several departments of dairy husbandry in the Northwest, several schools of forestry, several schools of mines, and why there should be more than one school of medicine or dentistry. Instead of States spending large sums of money to maintain institutions on a meager basis, why should not the representatives of the States, after a careful study of their needs, agree to maintain a number of scholarships available at other institutions of learning where work of the kind that they need is carried on?

Another one of the forces that is leading to interinstitutional coöperation is the extent to which the various subjects of human learning have become specialized. Some specialization is necessary, otherwise human progress would soon be resolved to the dead level of mediocrity. Important as specialization is, we should not overlook the fact that in the final analysis all human knowledge is related. Even the humanities and the natural sciences have points of contact. The various sciences are so interlaced and interdependent that one cannot exist without the other.

Research is to a certain extent an individual matter, but not wholly so. Due to the extreme specialization that now pervades every phase of our life, every scientist must seek the coöperation and assistance of other scientists in the elaboration of his hypotheses, in the conduct of his investigations, and in the verification of interpretation of his results. Research is also to a certain extent institutional. Over a period of years, given institu-

tions take on a certain atmosphere; they devote themselves to certain lines of intellectual effort and become distinguished by their achievements along these lines. Now the time has arrived when we should think of research as being interinstitutional. Ways and means should be found of bringing the institutions themselves into closer relationships. There should be an interchange of research projects. A research program covering the interests and activities of a number of institutions should be devised and an organization set up for its continuance. That means the intelligence of the various institutions should be brought to bear upon the problems of a given institution. An individual carries on his investigations for the purpose of finding out the truth; an institution, likewise, is interested in the truth, but also in the utility or service value of its investigations, while any interinstitutional arrangement would focus its attention still more upon the social utility of the studies being made.

Finally, there is another type of interinstitutional coöperation which has been described in a particularly happy manner as "A Southern Confederation of Learning," by Benjamin B. Kendrick, in the January 1934 issue of *Southwest Review*. Mr. Kendrick proposes a confederation to promote advancement and the humanizing of learning in the South. He is not interested so much in preserving and revivifying the Old South as in promoting a new regionalism that will give special emphasis to thought and culture, to art and to literature, to a beautiful and satisfying life. He calls attention to the fact that the educational system which has been in operation hitherto has failed to eradicate passion and prejudice. It has failed to create a sufficient number of like-minded people interested in public welfare to ensure the maintenance of institutions designed for the public good. These ends can be accomplished not by a laissez-faire form of education, but by having education properly conceived and administered as a condition precedent to such ends.